

either intrinsically or because of their associations, are concealed and repressed in the sub-liminal consciousness and by their occasional irregular defensive or expressive outbreaks, cause these borderline symptoms, which to a small degree characterize a large proportion of normal persons and to a larger degree characterize a large proportion of abnormal persons.

In such a semi-pathological classification may be placed certain minor forms of loss of memory, such as the sudden inability to recall the name of a person or article, certain tricks of the tongue which pervert what was intended to be said, certain kinds of errors both of judgment and of deed, and finally certain fixed ideas which, in a surprisingly large number of normal persons, come into the mind unsolicited and cannot be banished voluntarily.

Such obsessions of the normal mind are the subject of a suggestive note by C. S. Berry in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*.<sup>1</sup> The data compiled are drawn from a study of the written answers to appropriate questions asked of about 200 mature students of educational psychology. A typically grotesque and interesting list of fixed ideas was obtained, often associated characteristically with fatigue, either mental or physical, and apparently partaking in some cases of the elements of illusion, hallucinosis and dreams. About 25% of the 200 had at some time had fixed ideas.

Some noted ideas closely bordering on imperative ideas, such as an impulse to jump over a precipice or before a moving train. Berry makes two comments. (1) In many cases, with no outside aid, the obsession runs a self-limited course, and tends to disappear or at least to lose its emotional force. (2) In a large percentage the obsession dates back to childhood. Berry rightly urges the value of a careful scientific study of normal obsessions, not alone for the direct data to be obtained, but also for the light it would throw on their relation to pathological obsessions.

#### THE VASO-MOTOR SYMPTOMS OF THE MENOPAUSE.

In spite of the great advances of modern physiology and, especially, of the assistance given our understanding of the physiological disturbances connected with cessation of ovarian and testicular secretion by recent laboratory studies, there is much as yet unexplained in the symptomatology of the menopause. This is a matter of importance to every medical practitioner as the disorders and discomforts of this period have a striking nervous as well as physical effect. Particularly are the vaso-motor symptoms hard to control and vexatious to the patient.

Culbertson has recently made a study of this subject,<sup>2</sup> and his findings throw light on the causation especially of the vaso-motor disturbances and on a rationale of effective treatment. He explains the somatic and psychical disorders as the result of perverted function of the endocrine glands due to lack of ovarian secretion. The psychic features are especially due to the disturbed thyroid func-

tion, usually bordering on hyper-thyroidism but less commonly being the reverse.

This writer considers the vaso-motor symptoms to be due to an instability of the blood pressure, which usually appears as a "vacillating hyper-tension, both systolic and diastolic." He finds that the diastolic pressure is less increased than the systolic and thus results in a larger pulse pressure which is the immediate cause of the symptoms, associated with the vacillating arterial pressure. In the fewer cases where there is a hypo-tension, there is still an increased pulse pressure and a similar vacillation of pressure. The hyper-tension seems referable to excessive suprarenal or hypophyseal secretion. The blood pressure can be gradually brought to normal by the exhibition of the hormone contained in corpus luteum extract from animals in early gestation, and with this the vaso-motor symptoms disappear. Culbertson supports the view that the pressure changes are functional only, by the fact that the appropriate treatment with organ extract produces a return to normal and that there is a definite disproportion between the rise in systolic and diastolic pressure. He advises the control of the treatment by frequent, preferably daily, pressure readings.

#### EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Los Angeles county is the seat of a valuable innovation in public health work which, so far as our information extends, is the first instance of its kind in the west. In its usual pioneering style, the New York City Board of Health has for some time been doing similar work. Dr. J. L. Pomeroy, Health Officer of Los Angeles county, has had produced, in motion pictures, the story of diphtheria spread and control, and the 1100 feet of the film are to be used widely in that county at motion picture theaters as a measure of public education in the proper means of control of this disease. The pictures appeal to the lay intelligence in a fashion which is more authoritative and better remembered than either lecture or bulletin. These or similar films should be in the armamentarium of every health officer in the state. Those counties which cannot produce their own would do well to arrange for the loan or rental of films already made. See description under Los Angeles county news.

Why should not every doctor in the United States who is mentally, physically and morally fit, be in the M. R. C.? In the immediate future the Medical Reserve Corps must be immensely augmented and so as to enable the Surgeon-General to have at his command for immediate assignment, as conditions demand, a sufficient number of trained medical officers, let us take the above thought seriously. The German war depends for its success as much upon the medical profession, as upon the combatant forces, and while we do not know that any such intention as herein suggested, is in the mind of the Surgeon-General, it would at least give him the necessary corps of medical officers, from which to draw, and would serve the best interests of our country, and the best interests of the medical officers themselves.

<sup>1</sup> April-May, 1916, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Surgery, Gyn., and Obstet., Dec., 1916, p. 667.

Social and health insurance are topics of pertinent concern to the physicians of the state. The principle may be wrong, or inadequate or even unnecessary, and social insurance may be to the disadvantage of the individual doctor, especially in rural and small town communities. It may be unsound economically and will certainly require special safeguarding politically. But whatever its disadvantages, and they are many, it has certain merits and the fact is to be remembered that legislation establishing some form of social insurance seems certain to be enacted in California in the near future. If the medical profession does not direct and help work out this legislation, the profession will have only itself to thank for any injustice or disadvantage which may arise out of its operation. Whether we believe in the principle or not, we should be informed of the various features involved and be prepared to give intelligent and constructive criticism in the crisis approaching. By correspondence and special articles, it is urged that every point of view and argument pro or con, be sent to the JOURNAL for the use of the profession of the state.

Considerable attention has been devoted recently in the medical press to the food value of the banana. The banana has a high content of available and easily assimilable carbohydrate and forms an excellent food for adults and children alike. It is only necessary to be sure that the skin is unbroken and the fruit thoroughly ripe. The housewife has not begun to realize the possibilities of the banana in cookery. Many appetizing and nutritious dishes can be prepared from it. Details of such preparation can be secured on inquiry. Moreover it is to be remembered that the banana has, perhaps, advanced in cost as little as any staple article of food and is among the cheapest and best food sources now to be had.

Will you please once more scan the list of county editors and then turn to the department of county news and see how well each is doing his work. Fifteen counties are not yet represented and their tardiness in electing their associate editor is a reflection on them and a handicap to the work of the state organization in the development of the JOURNAL. Please let every line be filled by the next issue.

Several deaths have been reported as caused by gases discharged by the exhaust pipe of internal combustion engines. In two cases the victims had kept the engine of their automobile running while the car was in a small garage whose doors were closed. These accidents call renewed attention to the poisonous character of the exhaust gases, and should serve as a warning to all car owners. Incidentally they emphasize the danger of using the exhaust gases for heating purposes, as is done in some of our public conveyances. Unless extreme care is exercised a leakage of gas is liable to occur with a consequent exposure of passengers to the poisonous gases.—N. Y. Dept. of Health.

## Special Articles

### THE ARMY MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF THE FIRST DRAFT.

By HARRY B. REYNOLDS, Major M. R. C.,  
Medical Examiner for 91st Division, N. A.

The mustering of the first draft of the National Army is now completed, and the data is available on which may be based fair judgment of the efficiency of the machinery employed. Approximately forty-eight thousand men have been received at Camp Lewis. They have come from Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, California, Utah, Nevada and Alaska.

In general certain statements may be made not entirely pertinent to the medical subject of this paper, but of extreme interest to the thousands of patriotic citizens behind the army. It has been a matter of the keenest admiration of the Mustering Office to see the unfolding of the marvelously efficient plan of the Provost Marshal General. To devise and perfect the system, to foresee the difficulties and complications, to plan for the correction of errors due to untrained citizen personnel is recognized as an enormous task that has been marvelously accomplished.

Secondly, the work of the local boards has come to be recognized in this office as a highly satisfactory accomplishment.

To develop an organization during the progress of an essential task is a difficulty undertaking. Many of the complications were foreseen and provided for. Many more have been encountered that were not foreseen and it is safe to say that the next draft will be handled on a higher scale of efficiency. The patriotic zeal of these boards is highly commendable, and when the enormous total was appreciated and the small percentage of error was realized and when the total draft was examined and a survey made, results were very gratifying.

The cases of error in certification aggregated a total that was all too large and that should certainly not be repeated in future drafts. That it may be avoided, an analysis of the causes may be of value.

1. Many local boards were overworked or furnished inadequate time, personnel or equipment. In this way the quota of the City of Butte was estimated on a basis of 43,000 population and when it was realized that 93,000 was a closer estimate the quota was commensurately increased with no increased allowance in personnel or time. In consequence Butte sent in many errors due to this cause.

2. Cases were certified on which the examining physicians disagreed. When one man was rejected, the second examination was often required. The second examiner frequently recommended acceptance when the physical defect was very evidently disqualifying. These cases were fairly frequent. They can be explained on one of two counts, either the doctor was unfamiliar with army qualifications or he was openly and culpably favoring a candidate.

3. In certain instances of fairly frequent occur-